

## Environmental Health Perspectives at 50

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In April 1972, the recently established National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), under the leadership of David Rall, made a bold decision to launch a journal called *Environmental Health Perspectives* (EHP). The disciplines we now recognize as the environmental health sciences were still developing, and the journal started its life with a focus on publishing conference proceedings and reports from the institute and, later, the National Toxicology Program.

Over the past 50 years, in a history now documented in an [illustrated timeline](#), the journal has evolved and matured along with its core scientific disciplines. Since its launch, the journal has been premised on the idea that increasing the availability of information on the environmental health sciences is essential to solving environmental health problems. Our focus has remained resolutely on the intersection between the environment and human health, and the development of the journal has mirrored the impact that the NIEHS has had in fostering the science underlying environmental decision making.

In 1993, the journal adjusted its main interest to publishing peer-reviewed original research “ranging from the most basic molecular biology to environmental engineering.”<sup>1</sup> The journal has developed into a major venue for publishing high-impact novel research and commentaries in environmental toxicology, exposure biology and measurement, risk assessment, policy development and evaluation, and environmental epidemiology. EHP also features a news section translating environmental health scientific advances for nonspecialist readers.

A major anniversary provides the opportunity to reflect on where the journal has been and where it is going. We held a strategic planning summit with stakeholders in 2021 and used input from this meeting to update our vision, mission, and goals.<sup>2</sup> Now, in addition to our core work of reviewing and publishing peer-reviewed papers selected from approximately 2,000 submissions received each year, we have embarked on several new initiatives and areas of special interest.

Over the last 2 years, we have recognized that environmental health scientists, like the rest of society, are stepping up to face a “triple existential threat” to society’s health,<sup>3</sup> namely climate change, persistent structural racism with resulting inequities, and the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The journal has focused on each of these as they intersect with the environmental health sciences, and continues to solicit high-impact research on these critical topics.<sup>4–13</sup>

We have launched an Early Career Researcher Initiative, with an advisory panel itself comprising early career researchers to help guide our work. This initiative has spawned a number of new activities, including a forthcoming set of training modules to assist our contributors in reviewing, writing, and editing for the journal.

We are also launching new and exciting types of reviews in the environmental health sciences. These will include methodological reviews and summaries of advances in fundamental science with implications for environmental health

scientists. Guidelines for these new review types are coming soon.

Since its early days, the journal has emphasized outreach to an international community of researchers and policy makers. For some time, this included the production and distribution of content translated into Chinese, Spanish, and French. Last year we announced we are refocusing our international activities to foster an innovative, diverse, international community of environmental health contributors.<sup>14</sup> Toward this end, stay tuned for a new EHP initiative later this year that will provide a platform for the voices of environmental health scientists in low- and middle-income countries.

EHP has a rich history and an exciting future. Even as it has grown and changed, one constant is the special role the journal has played in the development of the disciplines that make up the environmental health sciences. I hope you will spend a few minutes reviewing our online timeline and learning how the journal has evolved along with major environmental milestones spanning 50 years. Help us celebrate this anniversary. Let us know how we are doing. And keep sending us your best work. I look forward to hearing from you.

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